

ASYLUM ROLES (Grice, Nisbett, Drinkwater, Renfield)

SIDE 05: GRICE and DRINKWATER and RENFIELD

(At the asylum. RENFIELD with DRINKWATER, and NURSE GRICE, a sadist. RENFIELD is chained up, sniffing and snuffing like a dog.)

GRICE. 'Mon now, Mr Renfield, drink up your nice medicine or Doctor Seward won't come back and take you walkies. Won't bring you back no nice rock from seaside. Give it him, Mr Drinkwater.

RENFIELD sniffs and points like a setter. DRINKWATER spoons stuff into him as he fawns and licks servilely.

GRICE. Good doggie, scoff up your medicine.

RENFIELD takes mouthfuls of it then, as DRINKWATER stands back, spits a mouthful right in GRICE's face.

GRICE. You stupid stupid cur! Kick him. Kick him from dawn to dusk and back again!

As DRINKWATER goes to kick him, RENFIELD quickly sits up and begs, tongue out, his eyes warning. DRINKWATER hesitates.

GRICE. Kick the shit out of him!

DRINKWATER can't, he stands back.

RENFIELD stands up, lucid, graceful, and picks up birds in cages. Holds them out and, standing with them like scales of justice, raising and lowering, he speaks first to DRINKWATER, then to GRICE.

RENFIELD. My master will bless you. He'll punish you! My master is at hand. And I am here to obey his every command. See the moon, Mr Drinkwater, how sweetly she sail, she wax once, she wane, and my master, my master he come again. Oh yes, Nurse Grice, him come! And me? Me, I sit, I sit with my birds in the wilderness, pretty birds, little victims, pretty ones, how they do flutter! The struggling sacrifice, Nurse Grice, ain't it nice, that do quicken the heart, that give a little flutter...

GRICE. Mad bastard! No wonder I'd not come in to you alone. Drinkwater, I'm putting you down on report. Disobeying orders. And him! Fuckin' fevvers in his teeth. Eatin' sparrers.

Exit GRICE and DRINKWATER.

RENFIELD. Prophet in the wilderness, proclaiming his coming: 'Full moon when next she sail, I sail with her, I come.'

SIDE 06: NISBETT and RENFIELD and DRINKWATER

(At the asylum. NURSE NISBETT comes with a bowl of gristly brown stew, for RENFIELD. DRINKWATER is a looming, shadowy presence.)

RENFIELD. Go away!

NISBETT. Mr Renfield, Mr Renfield, it's me, Nisbett, wiv sommat for you. Don't you fancy a little somethin'?

RENFIELD. Not hungry!

NISBETT. Take a bit, do then. Must be famished. Bastard clever-dick doctor putting you on starvation rations. He doesn't care! 'Doctor Seward, sir, Mr Renfield ett another sparrer. He did, sir. Coughed it up not half-hour after in a pool of puke and blood and feathers.' I wouldn't treat a dog like he treats you, Mr Renfield, I call it a sin. Experimenting. Doctor bloody God Almighty, eh? Seeing how far you'll go. Well, stands to reason, there be just no knowing how far a man'll go, you give him nothin'! Sick as a dog, poor lamb.

RENFIELD puts his hands over his ears, rocking and singing in loud monotone right in her face.

DRINKWATER observes, smoking. Stoic. He remembers what happened last time.

RENFIELD (singing).
Who ate Cock Robin,
My head is throbbin',
The sweet sound of sobbin', sobbin', sobbin'...

NISBETT. Yes. I wouldn't care, only it's me got to clean it up! (Pause.) Now then, it's not a lot and it's not hot but what I got I'll give it all to you, poor Mr Renfield.

RENFIELD dashes the plate and spoon out of her hands, and all over her apron goes the brown stew. She screams.

NISBETT. Scalded! Scalded me! You madman, that's the last time I ever try to help You...

She runs off, sobbing. DRINKWATER shrugs and follows.

RENFIELD.

(sings) Come into my parlour,
Said the spider
To the fly.

(speaks) Perhaps you'll die. Would you care to dine with me? Would you care to die with me...

He catches a fly, cracks it between his teeth with pleasure.

(sings) Yes, come
Into my parlour,
Said the spider
To the fly.

